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School told to 'get its house in order' over £40,000 deficit

JOBS TO GO AT ACADEMY

Kieran Davey
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BANBURY Academy has been told to "get its house in order" after it announced job losses due to losing more than £40,000 in the past year.

Mark Cherry, Oxfordshire county councillor for Banbury Calthorpe, criticised the school and its trust, Aspirations Academies Trust (AAT).

Banbury Academy associate principal Prahavi Osman said the job losses were down to fewer pupils, meaning the school got less Government money.

It come as AAT said the school ran at a loss of £40,547 in the past year, following a £93,000 loss the previous year.

Labour county councillor Mr Cherry said: "Anyone having to go through losing their job is clearly not ideal.

"I would like to see the academy trust sort this out so that it does not happen again. They have to get their house in order. The trouble is academies are outside the remit of local government so there is not a lot that the county council can do about it.

"But a school losing money is not good and I am not happy about it."

Mr Cherry said he was pleased Education Secretary Nicky Morgan scrapped plans last week to require all schools to become academies by 2020.

AAT said a maximum of six teachers would be made redundant and it would try to keep the number to a minimum.

The school was rated "requires improvement" by Ofsted after an inspection in June 2014, but inspectors said in January good progress was being made.

Mrs Osman said: "Banbury Academy needs to restructure support staff in line with the reduced size of the student population.

"It is hoped the reduction in staff numbers will be largely managed through the natural turnover of staff leaving, with minimal redundancies.

"Our priority is to provide the very best teaching and learning experience for all students and we anticipate that our results will continue to improve."

According to the school, the number of pupils has dropped by about 100 in each of the past 10 years but is scheduled to grow from next year as there are more pupils at local primary schools.

AAT director of finance and operations Simon Pink said: "Over the last decade the population at Banbury Academy, and its predecessor school, has reduced from 1,800 to 800. Naturally this leads to much lower funding, and increased budgetary challenges. The academy therefore has done well to keep the deficit so small.

"The budgetary position will gradually improve."

Mr Pink added the deficit was underwritten by AAT and would not have been allowed to happen if the trust did not have funds elsewhere to make up the shortfall.

A right Royal knees-up

Stilt walking was just one of the attractions that amazed the crowds at Banbury Old Town Spring Party on Saturday when the town went red, white and blue crazy to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE

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Campaigners are waiting for signal

Railway enthusiasts hope to turn former box into education establishment

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Pictured on the Bridge Street railway bridge with the signal box in the background are campaigners Nathan Bignell, left, and Mark Cockerhill

CAMPAIGNERS in Banbury face a nervous wait to find out if they will be able to save a historic signal box.

Earlier this year Network Rail announced plans to tear down two signal boxes near Banbury station as part of £76m upgrades.

But a group was set up on Facebook calling for the north box to be saved, as campaigners said it should instead be turned into an education centre for railway enthusiasts.

Following meetings with the operator, the group has been told to raise £60,000 to convert the box themselves, or it will be demolished in August.

The box, which was built in 1901, is scheduled to be taken down when the area's signalling system is upgraded and is moved to the West Midlands.

The group has been told it needs to raise the money this week, although the final figure – which includes capital and running costs, plus legal fees and insurance – may be negotiated.

So far about £10,000 has been raised through donations.

Banbury Civic Society chairman Rob Kinchin-Smith, who has been helping to lead the campaign, said: "We have been promoting the campaign on Just Giving and sending out leaflets to local businesses.

"There has been quite a generous response and people have been donating up to £500 for it.

"We understand it is a big ask to provide this money in a week.

"We realise as well, most companies have a fixed budget and as it's near the start of the year, they have not decided what to spend the money on."

The campaign group is also in the process of applying for charitable status, which will make it easier for them to raise money.

Mr Kinchin-Smith said: "Having spoken to companies, I know they can see the benefit of the project in terms of the sponsorship and having their name associated with the education side."

Under the plans, the north box would be leased by Network Rail to the charitable trust.

The box would be turned into an education centre to allow railway enthusiasts to learn more about the history of the box and modern railway safety.

About 500 people have joined the Facebook page, which was set up at the beginning of February.

Nathan Bignell, 22, who helped create the group, said it would be a disaster if the box was "demolished and left in a skip".

It is likely the south box will need to be demolished when the track is realigned later this year.

To join the Facebook page search for "Banbury North Signal Box" on the website.

There will be more discussion at a meeting on Friday between Network Rail and the steering group of Project Crossover.

1st Deddington Scout leader Janet Duxbury presents Harvey Rye with his Chief Scout's Gold Award

Top award for Scout Harvey

WHITE water rafting, after school clubs and sports research have all helped one 15-year-old secure the highest award possible for a Scout.

Harvey Rye, a pupil at the Warriner School in Bloxham, is celebrating after getting the coveted Chief Scout's Gold Award.

The 1st Adderbury Scout was presented the top award last month, by assistant county commissioner and 1st Deddington Group Scout leader Janet Duxbury.

She said: "It is fantastic to see a young person become so involved in his village activities outside of Scouting to gain his Chief Scout's Gold Award.

"Harvey will have the advantage of being able to add these achievements to his CV."

The youngster got stuck into volunteering at Adderbury Lakes and Christopher Rawlins School after-school clubs and also helped with the Adderbury neighbourhood plan by researching teens' sporting habits in the village.

He also did activities including canoeing, caving, white-water rafting and quad biking, which helped him get the award.

Scout Leader Andy Green said: "Harvey worked very hard to achieve this award.

"Today there are so many calls on a young person's time it takes true grit, determination and loyalty to succeed and pass all the requirements of the Chief Scout's Gold Award.

"At 1st Adderbury we are all very proud of him."

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Organisation that helps young children learn to read, guide dog and play bus volunteers among top prize-winners

Charities are featured in town community awards

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A CHARITY which helps schoolchildren who struggle to read has been awarded a top prize in this year's Banbury community awards.

ARCh (Assisted Reading for Children) was announced as the winner of the Town Mayor's community organisation of the year at the annual inauguration ceremony on Tuesday night.

The Bicester-based charity trains and supports volunteers to work one-to-one with primary school children, including in Banbury, to help spread a love of reading.

The winners were selected by outgoing Banbury town mayor Tony Mepham.

He said: "They do some fantastic work with schoolchildren to help them learn to read.

"It's important to get them into reading at such a young age.

"There were a lot of very worthy winners and it was a very difficult choice."

Last year ARCh received a grant of £3,900 from the Gannett Foundation, to buy a host of new books.

They recently started a drive to get more volunteers to join up as they have a waiting list of about 30 schools around the county.

The volunteer of the year award went to Brian Baker, from Guide Dogs Banbury.

The Kings Sutton resident, who is partially sighted, has worked for the charity since getting his dog Wicksy in 2010.

Mr Mepham said: "He has done lots of fundraising in the Banbury area and organises a lot of events."

Young volunteer of the year went to Caragh Daley, who helps out at the Banbury Play Bus charity.

She first started at the charity, which visits local communities in the North Oxfordshire area with its bus filled with activities and games, in 2015 and volunteers on a weekly basis. The volunteer of the year award is for someone who has shown dedication and enthusiasm for volunteering, while the young volunteer prize goes to someone aged under 25 who shows exceptional commitment to an unpaid activity, has taken responsibility and has shown a "can-do attitude."

People were invited to nominate winners by detailing why they should win.

On making the choices, Mr Mepham said: "Myself and my wife sat down to look at all the nominations and it was very difficult to pick just one.

"It's a shame that you can't pick a second place one or give one a special mention."

The award scheme was started by Banbury Hardwick councillor Nicholas Turner when he was town mayor in 2013/14.

From left, ARCh volunteer Maggie Lloyd, field worker Jo Leaver and development manager Jane Rendle

Car share club plan consultation hope

BANBURY: The town's Community Action Group has launched a new survey as it tries to start a new car share club in Banbury.

Car clubs are designed to give people access to cars who do not have them, or save people running for a car regularly for short journeys.

Users would sign up as a member and pay a monthly fee of about £5, and in return people can book the car online.

Similar schemes are already used in Oxford and elsewhere across the UK.

The survey will be open until May 29.

To fill it in go to banburycag.org.uk/banbury-car-club.

EU air quality plaudit

OXON: An MEP who represents Oxfordshire has been handed an award for her environmental achievements.

South East England MEP Catherine Bearder was given the Green Ribbon Political Award in recognition of her work fighting for stronger European targets to tackle air pollution.

The judges commended her for generating public awareness of the issue and championing EU action.

She said: "I am delighted to have been given this award and would like to thank all the tireless air quality campaigners who have worked with me on this vital issue."

Council meeting

N OXON: Cherwell District Council will be holding its annual council meeting on May 17.

It will be a chance to welcome new councillors following the local elections and to discuss the council's aims for the next year.

The meeting will take place at Bodicote House in Bodicote, starting at 6.30pm.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

'Bra baroness' set to support county firms

BUSINESS guru Nick Jones of Great Tew-based club Soho Farmhouse and Ultimo bra founder Baroness Michelle Mone will offer free advice to Oxfordshire firms in a business masterclass next week.

The pair are coming to The Ashmolean Museum on Wednesday, May 18, as part of government-backed programme Entrepreneurs Exchange, aimed at encouraging small firms to expand.

The event, which starts at 6pm, includes talks from Mr Jones and Baroness Mone about the challenges they overcame plus Q&A and networking slots.

The two-hour session, which is free, is part of a national programme involving 40 entrepreneurs across 20 towns and cities.

Other well-known self-starters running sessions in other parts of the country include Ann Summers boss Jacqueline Gold, Carphone Warehouse founder Sir Charles Dunstone and Justine Roberts, who created Mumsnet.

Prime Minister and Witney MP David Cameron said: "The passion and self-starting spirit of Britain's entrepreneurs are a driving force of our economic success.

"It's great to see such influential people who have built businesses from the ground up passing on their experience and expertise.

"This will inspire the next generation, who I am sure will value the support and I am sure that Entrepreneurs Exchange will be a great success."

Nick Jones, who runs a string of private clubs, hotels and restaurants in London and around the world, lives in Oxfordshire with his wife, journalist Kirsty Young and their children.

For more information, or to book a place, visit the website at www.entrepreneurs-exchange.co.uk.

Royal Artillery Band to be featured at forces tattoo

THE world-famous Royal Artillery Band will be the major attraction at this year's Armed Forces Day Tattoo in Banbury.

The event, on June 25, is moving to Spiceball Park to allow room for extra entertainment and attractions.

There will be arena displays, continuity drills, military vehicles and a flypast by a Second World War Hurricane.

Major Jeremy Burnan, commanding officer for the Banbury-based 142 Vehicle Squadron, said: "Last year's Armed Forces Day was hailed as one of the most spectacular in the country.

"This year's will be even better still.

"We are delighted to join in with the community, its cadets and veterans groups, to show what is best about today's armed forces – precision, commitment, excellence and pageantry.

"The squadron will again troop the colour of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars in a bigger and better venue, thanks to the excellent work of Banbury Town Council.

"And once again, a world-class military band will lead the ceremonies.

"The Royal Artillery Band plays regularly at royal events, the changing of the guard and at prestigious venues throughout the world. Banbury is up there with them."

A Chinook helicopter will fly in for the day, and there will also be a flight simulator and a mini-assault course.

The main area will also host demonstrations by Banbury's Air Training Corps, Army Cadets and Sea Cadets.

Town council event manager Ann Sewell said: "This is the third year running that Banbury has attracted one of Britain's top military marching bands.

"Last year we had the wonderful Band of the Irish Guards and in 2014 it was the Band of the Royal Logistic Corps."

Mile a day for pupils

N OXON: Junior pupils at Sibford School, in Sibford Ferris, have started the Daily Mile, which involves pupils running a mile each day, each lunchtime.

The scheme aims to improve the physical, emotional and social well-being of children.

Sibford assistant headteacher Edward Rossiter, who looks after the junior school, said: "We are delighted to sign up to the scheme and our experience in the first week has been brilliant.

"It only takes about 15 minutes out of the day but the benefits are fantastic.

"Staff have joined the children in their Daily Mile and even our three- and four-year-olds are taking part, although currently they are doing just a third of the distance."

Newsletter's appeal

CHIPPING NORTON: Writers at the town's community newsletter are still appealing for more volunteers to join their already thriving team.

Anyone who has a car and could spare a few hours a month helping distribute the *Chippy News* around town is urged to email chippymail@aol.com or get in touch with Jill on 01608 643219.

Tool theft from barn

N OXON: Thieves stole tools from a barn and used a wheelbarrow to make off with them.

Thames Valley Police said the tools were stolen at about 2pm on Tuesday, May 3, from the barn in Aynho Road, near Adderbury.

Police also confirmed a wheelbarrow was used to carry the tools from the field.

Call 101 if you have any information.

Conservatives celebrate as crime chief re-elected

Anthony Stansfeld in for another term after second count for commissioner

Michael Race
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CONSERVATIVE Anthony Stansfeld celebrated being elected to another term as police and crime commissioner with a comfortable win.

In a second-count battle between the candidate and Labour's Laetisia Carter, the 70-year-old won with a majority of 53.96 per cent to secure his position as PCC for Thames Valley.

The turnout was more than double the previous and first-ever PCC election in 2012, with 25.6 per cent of about 1.7m people across the region.

Of the 16 districts in the region, four areas in Oxfordshire backed Mr Stansfeld, with Mrs Carter gaining the majority of the vote in Oxford city for their first choice.

After finding out he had won, Mr Stansfeld said he was pleased with how his campaign had went and thought the public would appreciate the bigger mandate for the position.

In Oxford city alone, 38,109 people voted – the highest number compared to any other of the 15 districts in the region.

Winner Anthony Stansfeld after the count

Mr Stansfeld said he thought the role would be "simpler" this time round due to the staff positions and procedures being in place.

He added: "The campaign has gone very well and I'm pleased there was a bigger turnout than last time. It gives the role greater legitimacy.

"There was a considerable majority and I will do my best for the people of Thames Valley."

Mr Stansfeld said he would target household burglary, aim to help more vulnerable people and tackle the "rising problem" of cyber crime and fraud.

He added it was likely this would be his last term.

On the second preference count 222,396 votes went in favour of the Tory candidate compared to 172,717 for Mrs Carter.

With tears in her eyes, the Labour candidate said she was disappointed more than 15,500 ballot papers were rejected.

She added one reason she stood was to make sure a woman was one of the candidates.

Returning officer David Buckle said there could have been a number of reasons for void papers.

He added that unfortunately about 900 votes from the Reading district had been lost, but that it would not have made a difference to the election outcome.

Mrs Carter added: "I'm going to regroup and reflect on what has happened.

"I'm disappointed they felt they weren't given enough information about the role so I hope the government look at that.

"I wish Anthony well and I hope he brings some experienced women into his team."

Liberal democrat candidate John Howson finished third with 59,570 votes, while UKIP's Lea Trainer finished last with 49,942.

Great-grandfather 'honoured' to be appointed town's new mayor

A GREAT-grandfather-of-two says he feels honoured to become Banbury's new mayor after living in the town for more than 50 years.

Labour councillor Gordon Ross took up the mayoral chains at a special ceremony on Tuesday night, succeeding former mayor Tony Mepham.

The 77-year-old's term will last for one year and during that time he is expected to represent Banbury at hundreds of events, acting as "the face of the town".

A former council worker and advice centre volunteer, Mr Ross is stepping up from his current role of deputy mayor. That position has been filled by councillor Nicholas Turner.

Speaking to the Banbury Cake this week, Mr Ross said: "It is a great honour but a challenge at the same time, because I am expecting it will be very hard work.

"There is a massive amount of change happening around the town at the moment and I am going to do my best to represent the people of Banbury."

New Banbury Mayor Gordon Ross

He added: "What I'm most looking forward to is meeting people from the organisations like the sailing club or the Samaritans, and talking to people across the political spectrum."

Mr Ross, who was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, moved to Banbury in 1966 to work for the then borough council.

He remained there, retiring from Cherwell District Council as assistant chief environmental health officer in 1992.

The father-of-six, whose children and 13 grandchildren also mostly live in Banbury, then worked as a volunteer with the town's Citizen's Advice Bureau until 1997 before working as a debt and welfare adviser in Oxford until 2007.

He said his teenage grandchildren had taken particular interest in his new role: "They wanted to know if I'd have any powers.

"I said 'no, not really, it is basically a ceremonial role', but I will be wearing some nice robes and a different hat.

"My wife Mary is also looking forward to being mayoress, although I think she is slightly embarrassed by the idea of her friends curtseying to her."

Mr Ross's appointment was confirmed on Tuesday night.

Spotlight on children's centre funds

A DECISION on how £2m of extra funding for children's centres could be spent is set to be made this month.

Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet is expected to discuss the proposals on Tuesday, May 24, at a meeting in County Hall, Oxford.

Campaigners have called for the cash to go towards keeping as many of the county's 44 centres open as possible, with many facing the threat of closure next March.

It emerged last week that funding – which was saved from cuts at a budget meeting in March – is now likely to be spent on maintaining universal services, such as 'stay and play' at 11 centres which were only to be kept open for childcare.

This would be on top of the eight new 'children and family centres' which would offer a range of services and outreach to surrounding areas and be part of a reorganised children's services costing £12m a year.

Cherwell election count; inset, Cherwell deputy leader George Reynolds, left, and Sean Woodcock

All-out election left 'air of uncertainty'

Tories keep hold on council in first vote for newly revised wards

Naomi Herring
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AN ALL-OUT election in Cherwell threw up "an air of uncertainty" for the district as all candidates faced the vote across newly revised wards.

It was the first district council election since the Local Government Boundary Commission set new ward boundaries across the district, which meant the council would lose two members.

Conservatives kept their hold over the council securing 38 wins, eight Labour councillors and two independent councillors.

For the Liberal Democrats it was a sad loss as it lost its previous seat.

The results meant that Conservative candidate Norman Bolster and Labour's Matt Johnstone will no longer be on the council.

Deputy leader of Cherwell District Council George Reynolds said: "It was not only an all-out election but three candidates for each ward, which meant there was an enormous amount of split votes and strange combinations which would not usually happen.

"So for all parties that did have an affect this year.

"But we have all had to weather it out and the Conservatives still got a good hold on the majority."

The revised boundaries were put into place to ensure all councillors represent a similar number of residents, making it 16 wards instead of 28 with three councillors per ward.

This also meant that in order for the council to get back to running elections by thirds, this year's winners were elected for either two, three or four years depending on the number of votes they received.

Throughout the morning on Friday returning officer Sue Smith said: "At the moment from my point of view the process it is going very smoothly, we have had no issues.

"We have had a few fairly difficult years in election terms and we seem to be getting through the process quite quickly."

She added: "The all-out election means there are more candidates and more uncertainty of different ward boundaries.

"It is difficult to predict – not that I would – but for candidates with the new boundaries there is an air of uncertainty which we are not used to having in Cherwell.

"It matters more when it is an all-out election as the highest number of votes is in for four years and will not have to go up again in two year's time."

Cherwell District Council will retain elections by thirds from 2018 onwards, which mean one third of those elected this time will serve for two years, one third for three years and one third for four years.

Labour's Sean Woodcock, who kept his seat in Ruscote, said: "Disappointed not to take the council, we had a good manifesto of things we wanted to do.

"People in Grimsbury, Ruscote and Hightown have shown how, in Banbury, Labour is the real opposition to the Tories. And in Bicester East we were very close, so we are confident it is a stepping stone to better things."

BANBURY RESULTS

Calthorpe North
Bernard Dod (Green) 68
Nick Harrison (Con) 258 E
Joseph Walsh (Lab) 152

Calthorpe South
Colin Clarke (Con) 481 E
Jane Hamel (Green) 120
Simon Hartwell (Labour) 246
Nigel Morris (Con) 459 E
Philip Richards (Lab) 209

Easington North
Dawn Gosling (Green) 36
Sonny Sidhu (Lab) 46
Tina Wren (Con) 68 E

Easington South
Mike Beal (Lab) 505
John Colegrave (Con) 839 E
Non Kinchin-Smith (Green) 263
Kieron Mallon (Con) 868 E
Jane Rogers (Labour) 432

Grimsbury
Kenneth Ashworth (LibDem) 165
Jack Barton (Green) 263
Andrew Beere (Lab) 812 E
Claire Bell (Lab) 790 E
Shaida Hussain (Lab) 723 E
Azmat Khaliq (Con) 440
Tony Mepham (Con) 570
Dave Wiles (LibDem) 209
Garry Wills (Con) 490

Hardwick East
Arash Faitmian (Con) 6 E
Ros Jones (Labour) 1

Hardwick West
Jez Denton (Labour) 660
John Donaldson (Con) 775 E
Lucy Donaldson (Con) 756 E
Mary Evans Young (Lab) 665
Henry Goodman (Lab 608)
Tony Ilott (Con) 716 E
Steve Molloy (Lab) 593
Nicholas Turner (Con) 733 E

Neithrop North
Ruth Aris (Green) 98
Surinder Dhesi (Lab) 447 E
Andrew McHugh (Con) 244

Neithrop South
Andrew Aris (Green) 158
Derek Evans (Lab) 340
Alastair Milne Home (Con) 368 E

Park Road
John Haywood (Green 50
Steve Kilsby (Lab) 167 E
Douglas Webb (Con) 71

Ruscote
Mark Cherry (Lab) 1243 E
Barry Richards (Lab) 1051 E
Isabel Rimmer (Con) 483
Stuart Robbins (Con) 504
Gordon Ross (Lab) 1002 E
Nicola Smith (Con) 473
Pat Tompson (Con) 498
Sean Woodward (Lab) 1043 E

Town Centre
Hannah Banfield (Lab) 287 E
Nick Poole (Con) 233

Lucy, 19, is youngest ever councillor elected in town

Lucy Donaldson

BANBURY has its youngest ever town councillor.

The election of 19-year-old Lucy Donaldson for the Hardwick West ward played a crucial role in keeping the Conservatives in control after Thursday's local elections.

The Tories lost one seat to Labour but still have a 12-10 majority.

Lucy, daughter of long-serving councillor and former mayor John Donaldson, said: "I did a lot of canvassing and hoped to pick up the young persons' and the women's votes.

"I've got a lot to learn but I'm really looking forward to getting started."

The Conservatives held on to power despite ward changes that many thought would favour Labour.

The council went from eight wards to 12 after changes ordered by the Boundary Commission.

Still leader of the council, Kieron Mallon said: "This has been a campaign that was hard to predict. None of us were sure about the effects of the ward changes.

"I want to congratulate all the Conservative candidates who fought this election on purely local policies.

"We have two new young councillors in Arash Fatemian and Lucy Donaldson.

"I'm sure they will both be an asset to the council. We are sorry to have lost Tony Mepham who has been a fantastic mayor this year."

Labour leader Steve Kilsby said: "It was an interesting day.

"It was a long and difficult campaign, but all the parties behaved honourably and can hold their heads high."

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Royal birthday revels thrill town

'Older residents can recall when these streets bustled with shoppers every day'

Joe Gammie
jgammie@nqo.com

Clockwise from top left, Ken Gillette and his wife Jane of Sweet Celebrations as Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn; Caroline the musical saw player; dancing to the music; Queen of all she surveys Amie James and crowds in the street for the Banbury Old Town Spring Party

UNION Jacks and regal outfits gave Banbury a royal makeover as part of the annual Old Town Spring Party.

Blue, red and white bunting and balloons hung over people bustling through the town centre while traders brought their wares out into the street for the event on Saturday. Amie James cut a regal figure with her crown and inflatable dog outside Buywise in Parson's Street, while Ken Gillette and wife Jane of Sweet Celebrations in Church Lane joined the party as Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

Tastebuds were tantalised with a selection of sweet treats being sold by students from Banbury and Bicester College, stilt-walkers in their Union Jack-themed outfits wowed the crowd with their juggling and elongated bikes, and children could enjoy the Punch and Judy show.

Musicians lined the streets to add to the party atmosphere including Caroline the musical saw player, and others with more traditional instruments.

Organised by Banbury Town Council and Banbury Old Town Association, the Old Town Spring Party aims to showcase the wide variety of shops and businesses in the town centre.

Outgoing Banbury town mayor Tony Mepham said: "Parson's Street and Church Lane really came alive.

"Older residents can remember the days when these streets bustled with shoppers every day of the week.

"Days like this are a pleasant reminder of days gone by and it's great that that old town parties are now regular features of Banbury's calendar."

The theme of Saturday's party was the Queen's 90th birthday, and businesses bedecked their stores and stalls with British memorabilia and colours in the hope of being crowned the best-dressed window display.

More than 25 independent businesses and community organisations from around Banbury took their trade and talents out on to the streets for the day.

The independent shops, cafes, pubs, and restaurants added to the party spirit by trading along Parsons Street, Church Lane, Church Walk and into White Lion Walk, High Street and Market Place.

Other stalls were set up including representatives from Age UK, Visit Banbury, Banbury and Bicester College, Banbury Town Council, The Mill Arts Centre, Banbury Museum and Joanne Mills School of Dance.

Some of the town centre's newer businesses were taking part in their first Old Town Party including Hoops Donuts and Coffee, Banbury South African Store, and El Safina Coffee House.

The event is supported by Cherwell District Council, Banbury and Bicester College, Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Sketts, Your Letterbox and Banbury's town team co-ordinators.

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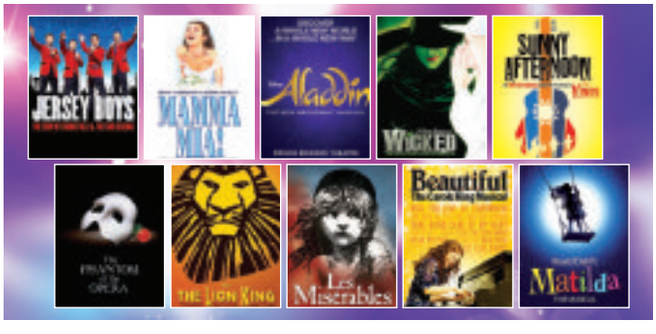

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A warm and nostalgic tale

EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!! **(15, 117 mins) Drama/Comedy/Romance. Blake Jenner, Juston Street, Ryan Guzman, Tyler Hoechlin, Wyatt Russell, Glen Powell, Temple Baker, J Quinton Johnson, Tanner Kalina, Will Brittain, Zoey Deutch, Michael Monsour. Director: Richard Linklater**

OSCAR nominated writer-director Richard Linklater rekindles a bright flame of nostalgia in this valentine to student life, which exudes the same freewheeling vibe as his seminal 1993 film, *Dazed And Confused*.

While that picture illuminated growing pains at a 1970s high school, *Everybody Wants Some!!* zips up its impossibly tight jeans in the autumn of 1980, when a group of hormone-crazed college freshmen and sophomores hope to make their mark on the baseball field.

The script has no obvious sense of urgency or clear narrative direction, ambling through a series of bittersweet vignettes in the days before the hormone-fuelled characters are due to attend their first class.

Yet from this loose and seemingly flimsy framework, the filmmaker constructs a vivid and touching portrait of youthful exuberance and fraternal bonding that speaks to all of us who have struggled to find our niche and stand out from the crowd.

Everybody Wants Some!! is a beautifully crafted blast from the past, blessed with strong performances from fresh-faced rising stars.

THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE **(U, 97 mins) Animation/Action/Comedy/Romance. Featuring the voices of Jason Sudeikis, Josh Gad, Danny McBride, Maya Rudolph, Sean Penn, Peter Dinklage, Bill Hader, Keegan-Michael Key. Directors: Clay Kaytis, Fergal Reilly**

STRIP back the pristine visuals, which were once meticulously hand-drawn, and most animated films are hard-wired with an important life lesson to cherish once the end credits roll.

The Angry Birds Movie, a feature-length animated spin-off from the fiendishly addictive smartphone games, tears out a new page from the self-help manual: it's ok to get mad as long as you can channel that aggression in a positive direction.

Screenwriter Jon Vitti peppers this haphazard, but energetic flight of self-discovery with a barrage of dreadful puns and dad jokes that will inspire as many groans as giggles.

The Angry Birds Movie is a glossy promo for the games and associated merchandise, showcasing the different birds and their associated powers, but it's also a lot of fun so long as you ignore the flimsy and predictable plot.

Animation quality doesn't soar to the dizzy heights of Pixar, but co-directors Kaytis and Reilly maintain a brisk pace and the screen shimmers with bright colours.

OUR KIND OF TRAITOR **(15, 108 mins) Thriller/Romance/Action. Ewan McGregor, Stellan Skarsgard, Damian Lewis, Naomie Harris, Mark Gatiss, Khalid Abdalla, Jeremy Northam, Saskia Reeves, Grigoriy Dobrygin. Director: Susanna White.**

SCREENWRITER Hossein Amini's adaptation of Le Carre page turner, *Our Kind Of Traitor*, is perfectly timed to capitalise on the resurgent interest in the author and his expert dissection of MI6 practices.

Hinging on a chance encounter between a naive British everyman and a flashy East European powerbroker, Susanna White's film flits across international borders as it asks us to believe that a plummy academic would risk his humdrum life for a total stranger by virtue of his unshakeable goodness.

Blake Jenner in *Everybody Wants Some!!* and, inset, Ewan McGregor, Naomie Harris and Damian Lewis in *Our Kind of Traitor*

Anchored by Skarsgard's eye-catching portrayal of a family man with a twisted moral code, *Our Kind Of Traitor* simmers pleasantly, but never turns up the heat sufficiently on McGregor and Harris' do gooders.

White choreographs some memorable interludes, including a hallucinogenic party where one naked lovely trots around an opulent house on horseback, but the protracted chase sequences do not come across as particularly suspenseful.

Amini's script telegraphs its intentions, sustaining dramatic momentum, if not the vice-like tension we crave.

Cake Bookworm

Girls On Fire **by Robin Wasserman is published in hardback by Little, Brown, priced £12.99 (ebook £6.99)**

IF YOU go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise. But what happens in Robin Wasserman's *Girls On Fire* is no teddy bears' picnic. It all begins with the discovery of high school student, Craig Ellison's body on Halloween. His death is attributed to suicide, but in the insular conservative world of Battle Creek, it doesn't take much to instil in people the fear that there is a darker force at play. Robin Wasserman has created a modern fable about female adolescence gone horribly wrong. An unsettling tale of friendships realigned, alliances made and broken, lives beginning and ruined, this is one of the most gripping reads of the year.

The Mandibles: A Family, 2029-2047 **by Lionel Shriver is published in hardback by The Borough Press, priced £16.99 (ebook £9.99)**

IT'S 2029, and driverless cars, household cyborgs and children named after search engines are the norm – but so are water shortages and hyperinflation. Forced under one roof thanks to an epic economic depression that makes the 2009 crash look like the tiniest of hiccups, four generations of the once affluent Mandible family must navigate a New York that's becoming more dystopian by the minute. But persistence pays off, for the reader as much as the Mandibles: what starts as unrelentingly bleak becomes a riveting – but still anxiety-inducing – read, as the family members resort to ever more desperate measures to stay afloat. Shriver constructs the frighteningly believable near-future expertly and adds a healthy dose of knowing black humour (authors are obsolete by 2029) into the mix.

Fingers In The Sparkle Jar: A Memoir **by Chris Packham is published in hardback by Ebury, priced £20 (ebook £9.99)**

THE diversity and beauty of life is the metaphor for the eponymous sparkle jar in this very unconventional memoir from *Springwatch* presenter and conservationist Chris Packham. It's written largely in the third person, offering a glimpse of his life from the age of six to 16, an awkward, socially inept child who was bullied and became a solitary observer of wildlife. He charts his remarkable bond with a kestrel he took from its nest illegally. The memoir takes a darker turn in short, italicised chapters dated nearly 30 years later, when he chats to a therapist about his suicidal thoughts. The gaps leave the reader longing to find out more about how this wildlife-obsessed kid came out of the depths of depression to make his way in the world.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and James is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Sturdy's Castle layby, Banbury Road, Tackley. Leisurely nine-mile circular walk taking in part of the Oxfordshire Way, Dorn Valley and Tackley Heath. Bring picnic lunch. Registered assistance dogs only. 10am.

Didcot & District Archaeological and Historical Society: Northbourne Centre, Church Street, Didcot. Talk on Chedworth Roman Villa by Nick Humphris. 7.30pm. £4 for visitors. 01235 816376.

OMEGA ME/CFS Awareness social/support group: Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Shillingford Road, Shillingford. 12pm. Free. 01491 838727.

Prof Anne Curry – The Agincourt Lecture: Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Road, Banbury. Professor of Medieval History at Southampton University, who has published extensively on Agincourt, and is chair of the Trustees of Agincourt 600. Book at www.banburymuseum.org 7pm. £10 includes drink. 01295 753752.

Ramblers walk: Church Lane, Horton cum Studley. Leisurely six-mile walk to Otmoor via Beckley. Walk not suitable for dogs. 10am. 01865 358905.

South African plants in the wild and in your garden: Ridgeway Community Church Centre, Wood Street, Wallingford. Wallingford Gardening Club with speaker Sue Bedwell, who trained and taught at Waterperry Gardens. 7.30pm. Visitors £2. 01491 836867.

Sunningwell & District Gardening Club: Village Hall, Main Road, Sunningwell. Members' meeting with the annual Single Bloom or Spray in a Vase competition and Q&A session. 7.30pm. £2 (visitors £3).

Sunningwell and Bayworth WI meeting: Village Hall, Main Road, Sunningwell. Talk by Duncan Brown, the youngest mayor in Abingdon. 2pm. £3 donation.

FRIDAY

Katharine House Hospice Open Day: Katharine House Hospice, Aynho Road, Adderbury. Talks at 3pm, 4pm, and 5pm, followed by a tour of the hospice and grounds. 2.30pm. Free. 01295 816484.

Sewing a hi-vis safety vest: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Di will help you make hi-vis safety vests for your little ones to keep them visible and safer when playing out and about. All materials provided. Booking required. 10am. £10. 01235 511550.

Wrestling: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. Two hours of all-action family entertainment. Tickets from Didcot Civic Hall. 7pm. Adults £11, concessions £9. 01235 512436.

SATURDAY

Are you sitting comfortably?: The Mix Community Space, 15 Mill Street, Wantage. Make cushions with fabrics from the Resource Bank. 10am. Free. 07768 767787.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: St John the Evangelist Church, Little Tew. Leisurely 4.5-mile walk. This walk is interesting for children and the pace will be set by children. Leader Lionel Howse. 10am.

Big Blue Bungee and fun day: Alvescot Road Recreation Ground, Alvescot Road, Carterton. Big Blue Bungee challenge in aid of Blue Cross Burford rehoming centre. Registration and sponsorship required. Plus Paws for Tea party, stallholders and more. 10am. Free. 0300 777 1974.

Book Sale: The Corner House, Market Street, Charlbury. 9am. Free. 01608 811899.

Charity Pamper Day: The Core Zone Pilates and Yoga Studio, The Old Stone Barn, Burgess Farm, Farthinghoe Road, Middleton Cheney. For Katharine House Hospice. Mini treatments for £5 pus stalls, raffle and light refreshments. 10am. Free entry. 01295 710804.

Craft & Art Fair: All Saints' Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay. 10am. Free admission. 01235 848768.

Ewelme Horticultural Society Plant Sale: Village Hall, The Street, Ewelme. 10am. Free.

Fringford Spring Fayre: Fringford Village Green & Hall, The Green Fringford. 1pm. Free entry.

Garage/front garden sale: Number 15, Holland Road, Abingdon. Donation will be made to Helen & Douglas House Hospice. 10am. Free.

Grand Plant Sale & Coffee Morning: Chilton Village Hall, Church Hill, Chilton. 10am. Free. 01235 834503.

Hanborough Mammoth Garage Sale: Long Hanborough village. About 30 garages taking part. Maps available from the Methodist Church from 9.30am. In aid of the Methodist Church Building Fund. 10am-2pm. Free. 01993 881711.

Jumble sale: Village hall, Fewcott Road, Fritwell. 1st Fritwell Scouts. 2pm. Free. 07986 520553.

Murder Mystery Dining Train: Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway, Station Approach, Station Road, Chinnor. Solve the clues on a three-course evening dining train. See www.chinnorrailway.co.uk 6.15pm. Adult £45. 07979 055366.

Open Day at The Witney Music Rooms: The Witney Music Rooms, Eagle Industrial Estate, Church Green, Witney. Four live bands and solo artists, a bar, and demonstrations. 10am. Free. 07799 117332.

Plant Sale: Market Place, Wallingford. Wallingford Gardening Club. 10am. 01491 836867.

Plant Sale: St James' Church Centre, Beauchamp Lane, Cowley. 12pm. Free. 01865 770865.

Plant Sale and Coffee Morning: Wantage Methodist Church Hall, Newbury Street, Wantage. Proceeds to Wantage Methodist Church Project 21. 9.30am. Free entry.

St Helen's Spring Plant Sale: St Helen's Church, Dry Sandford, Church Lane, Dry Sandford. 10am. Free.

Walk (Fieldpaths): Plough Inn, The Green, Upper Wolvercote. SP495098 eight miles. A linear walk to Woodstock via Yarnton, Bladon and Blenheim Palace parkland. Returning by S3 bus from Woodstock. Bring a picnic lunch and refreshments. Assistance dogs only. 10am. 01865 512259.

Wallingford Art and Craft Exhibition and Sale: Centre 70, off Kiln Lane Goldsmith Lane, Wallingford. 10am. free. 07803263320.

White Horse Garden Club: Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Broad Street, Uffington. Mega plant sale. 2.30pm. Free. 01367 820251.

SUNDAY

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Steeple Aston Church, North Side, Steeple Aston. Leisurely five-mile circular walk via Rousham and Lower Heyford. Leader Sue Curtis. 2pm. 07986 813352.

Craft & Art Fair: All Saints' Church, The Green, Sutton Courtenay. 10am. Free. 01235 848768.

Craft Fair: Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary, Old Didcot Road, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. 10am. Buyers entry 50p. 01491 833938.

Guided Forage Walk: Cogges Manor Farm, Church Lane, Cogges, Witney. Learn about edible plants/weeds. Includes cooking gathered edible plants over a fire. Book at www.wychwoodproject.org/cms/content/events. 2pm. £10/£5. 01993 815420.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Flexicare Fundraising Walk: Snells Hall, Church Street, East Hendred. Two circular routes of five or 10 miles and a wheelchair/buggy friendly route. Flexicare is an Oxfordshire children's charity which provides help and support to families with a severely disabled child. 9am. Free. 01865 321881.

Long Wittenham Fun Run and Walk: The Plough Inn, High Street, Long Wittenham. 5km fun run and walk. Fun day in the Plough gardens after the event. 11am. £3 adult, 50p child, £6 for family. 07951 009561.

National Garden Scheme: Hollyhocks, North Street, Islip. Plantswoman's small Edwardian garden, brimming with year-round interest, especially planted to provide winter colour, scent and snowdrops. Plant sale. Teas. 2pm. £3.50, children free. 01865 377104.

National Garden Scheme: Lime Close, 35 Henleys Lane, Drayton. Three-acre mature plantsman's garden with rare trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs. Wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Plant sale. 2pm. Adult £5, children free.

National Gardens Scheme: The Grove, North Street, Middle Barton. Mature informal plantsman's third of an acre garden, planted for year-round interest around C19 Cotswold stone cottage (not open). Limited wheelchair access. Plant sale. Teas. 1.30pm. Adult £3, children free.

National Gardens Scheme: Home Farm House, Pusey, Faringdon. A newly-formed garden in a peaceful rural setting. Partial wheelchair access. Steep slope to rose garden. Gravel paths. Home-made teas. 2pm. Adult £4, children free.

Open Garden: The Walled Garden, Wilcote, North Leigh. Bridewell Organic Gardens provides a recovery service for people with mental health issues through land-based activities. There is a walled garden and an organic vineyard. 2pm. £3.50, children free. 01993 868313.

Ramblers walk: Car park at rear of King & Queen PH, Wheatley. Nine-mile walk via Garsington and Shotover. Bring a picnic. 10am. 01865 708736.

Sensory Walk: Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham. Identifying birdsong, silent walking and photography, and blindfolded tasting. Bring your own camera. Booking essential. 2pm. £12. 01865 407792.

Try Tennis For Free: Cholsey Tennis Club, Station Road, Cholsey. 10am. 01491 651477.

MONDAY

Bicester Local History Society: Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, Bicester. Dressing Up the Past – Historical Pageants in 20th Century. 7.30pm. Free. 01869 247857.

Local History Talk: Kennington Methodist Church, Upper Road, Kennington. An illustrated talk entitled The Oxford Dambusters by historian Tony Rogerson. 7.45pm. Visitors £2:50. 01865 739208.

Vale of the White Horse Branch, Berkshire Family History Society: Long Furlong Community Centre, Boulter Drive, Abingdon. Talk by Meryl Catty entitled 'Willpower'. 7.30pm. 07851 206313.

TUESDAY

Tips on outdoor sketching: Centre 70, off Kiln Lane, Goldsmith Lane, Wallingford. Demonstration by Chris Jones, artist with 30 years of experience. 7.30pm. £3 to visitors, free to members. 07803 263320.

Drop in and Draw sessions – have a go at figure drawing: Cornerstone Arts Centre, Station Road, Didcot. Basic drawing materials will be supplied. 2pm. Free. 01235 515144.

Knitting for beginners: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Three-session course to get you casting on, casting off, knitting and purling. You'll get needles and yarn. 7pm. £30. 01235 511550.

Sew a fabric table mat: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Fabric and bias binding included. 7pm. £18. 01235 511550.

WEDNESDAY

Abingdon Decorative and Fine Arts Society Lecture: Trinity Church, Conduit Road, Abingdon. Donatello and the Italian Renaissance by art historian and NADFAS accredited lecturer Jo Walton. For details see www.adfas.org.uk 2pm.

Music

THURSDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Grant Sharkey, Vienna Ditto, Beard Of Destiny. 8pm.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Wheatus. Rockers best known for hit single *Teenage Dirtbag*. 7pm. £15.

FRIDAY

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Eliza and Martin Carthy. Father and daughter folk duo unite for an evening of music from their new CD *Elephant*. £16.50, £15 (concs). 8pm. 01235 515144.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Treetop Flyers, Shapes, Les Clochards. Acoustic country folksters promote their new album *Palomino*. 7pm. £10.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Violence Is Golden, Man Make Fire, Ways Across, Not Too Shabby, Social Discharge. Hard rock/heavy metal. 6pm. £8.

SATURDAY

North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Duotone and support. An evening of live music in aid of CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) – an organisation dedicated to preventing male suicide through challenging masculine stereotypes and encouraging men to talk. £14 (£10 concessions). 8pm. 01865 319450.

St Edburg's Church, Church Street, Bicester: The Lincoln Noel Trio. Jazz. £10 (on the door £12, U18 £3). 7.30pm. 01869 249555.

St Nicolas' Church, Market Place, Abingdon: Abingdon Gospel Choir concert. Gospel favourites, old and new. Free but with retiring collection. 11am.

St Peter's Church, Thames Street, Wallingford: The Sacconi String Quartet. £14 or £12 in advance. 8pm. 01491 824792.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Spring King. Garage rock. 7pm. £8 (adv).

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Aliases, The Crushing, Twisted State Of Mind, The Grand Mal, Fault Line. Metal/hard rock. 6pm. £9. Magnum, Vega. Veteran UK melodic rockers. 6.30pm. £22.50.

St Leonard's Church, High Street, Eynsham: Bach's St John Passion. Eynsham Choral Society with orchestra and professional soloists, conductor Stuart Dunlop. £12 (£10 concessions). 7.30pm. 01865 604262.

SUNDAY

St Mary's Church, Church Green, Witney: Brahms German Requiem. The Lower Windrush Choral Society celebrate their 25th anniversary. £10. 4.30pm. 01865 300625.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Andy Jordan. Star of reality show *Made In Chelsea*. 7pm. £11 (£25 VIP Package).

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford: Cate Cody Trio. Jazz. 6.30-9pm. Free.

Rose & Crown, 14 North Parade Avenue, Oxford: Just Friends Quartet. Classic jazz. 7pm. Free.

MONDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Night Beats & Swedish Death Candy. Seattle psych-rockers. 7pm. £10 adv.

TUESDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Heavy Dexters. Jazz/funk band. 8.30pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

The Comrades Club, Newbury Street, Wantage: Zelda's Jazz Room. Harlem Knights. £10. 8pm. 01235 765648.

The Queen's College, The Nun's Garden, High Street, Oxford: The Eglesfield Musical Society – Sweeney Todd. 7.30pm. 01865 279120.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Courage My Love, Over, Better Than Never, The Kaos, One State Drive. Canadian pop-punk trio on UK tour. 7pm. £10 (adv), £14 (otd).

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: September Girls, Telegram, Orange Vision. Irish pop-punk quintet. 7pm. £8.

Theatre

Burton Taylor Studio, Beaumont Street, Oxford: May 10-14, *Pripyat*. 7.30pm. £6(£5). May 10-14, *Me & Mike*. 9.30pm. £6(£5). May 17-21, *God of Carnage*. 7.30pm. £6 (£5). 01865 305305.

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: May 14, Clint Edwards, Ben Norris, Rob Deering and Pat Cahill. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 04007.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: May 10-12, *Of Mice and Men*. 7.30pm. £11.50-£27. May 17-21, *Clybourne Park*. Various times. £11.50-£27. 01865 305305.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: May 11-12, Bill Bailey. 8pm. £28.90 plus £2.85 transaction fee. May 13, *BalletBoyz – Life*. 7.30pm. £16.90-£29.40 plus £4 transaction fee. May 17, *That's Entertainment*. 7.30pm. £17.90-£41.40 plus £4 transaction fee. 0844 871 3020.

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: May 14, *Dinosaur Park (The Jurassic Parody)*. 7pm. Age guide 8+. £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

Corn Exchange, Market Place, Wallingford: May 18-21, *Bazaar and Rummage* by Sue Townsend. Sinodun Players. 7.45pm. £10. 01491 825000.

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: May 12-14, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Chipping Norton Amateur Operatic Society. 7.30pm plus Sat mat 2.30pm. £14. 01608 642350.

CakeSport

banburycake.co.uk/sport

Hugo Darby made an excellent start to the club season with 90 not out

Darby stars for Banbury

Unbeaten opener's innings proves decisive

CRICKET

BANBURY were given a fright before securing a 35-run win in their Serious Cricket Home Counties Premier League Division 1 match at Harefield.

The visitors got off to a flier with an opening stand of 90 between Hugo Darby and Craig Haupt, and with Australian under 19 player Kurtis Patterson adding a run-a-ball 36, they were cruising at 136-1.

But three quick wickets, including that of skipper Lloyd Sabin first ball, slowed their progress, and it needed Darby's unbeaten 90 for them to reach 234-6. Harefield were well placed at 114-2, but Charles Hill's run out of Ollie Richards for 57 turned the tide, and a tidy spell from Ollie Wright restricted them to 199-8.

BANBURY

H Darby not out 90
C Haupt c Ogden b Crick 45
K Patterson c Day b Norotam 36
L Sabin lbw Norotam 0
R West c Day b King 11
L Ryan c & b Ogden 18
W Hawtin c Day b Ogden 13
K Penhale not out 6
Extras 15
Total (6 wkts, 50 ovs) 234

Fall: 1-92, 2-136, 3-136, 4-152, 5-175, 6-217.
Bowling: King 10-1-28-1, Norotam 7-0-31-2, Morris 9-0-42-0, Crick 8-0-41-1, Vijay 4-0-23-0, Ogden 9-1-40-2, Morris 3-0-25-0.

HAREFIELD

J Shiel c Patterson b Wright 33
D Ogden c Darby b Ryan 20
J Vijay c West b Taylor 20
O Richards run out 57
P Vyas c Hauptb Taylor 2
D Norotam c Haupt b West 1
D King c & b West 7
S Morris b Wright 27
T Day not out 7
D Morris not out 10
Extras 15
Total (8 wkt, 50 ovs) 199

Fall: 1-65, 2-69, 3-114, 4-120, 5-123, 6-135, 7-169, 8-183.
Bowling: Penhale 4-0-19-0, Taylor 9-1-40-2, Ryan 10-1-36-1, Wright 10-1-27-2, West 10-1-44-2, Hill 3-0-17-0, Sabin 4-0-13-0.

Harefield 6pts, Banbury 20

Banbury's Luke Ryan hit 45 not out as Oxfordshire lost by three runs in their Unicorns Trophy Group 1 match at Wargrave.

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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19
I know you want to impress those with the power, but you also have to work on balancing your personal life this week, which your stars show me you have been neglecting. Plan your week and don't let others deter you from your intentions. You can tie up several loose ends to your advantage if you maintain control. Ring now to hear why manners are essential this weekend.
0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20
A change in the family may come as a shock to you, but will turn out to be a blessing for all concerned. Try not to have too much of an opinion if you don't yet know all of the facts or you could cast yourself as biased and old fashioned. Scorpios provide an ear for you to share your worries and some good solutions too. Ring now so I can tell you about tomorrow today.
0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20
New information comes to light which allows you to better understand why a close one has been acting so distantly in the last few days and weeks. Try to stick to midweek appointments as it can, and will, make all the difference to whether or not you impress those who can take your career to the next level, as well as your finances. Ring now to hear how love links to white lies you'll be telling.
0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22
The home comes under the spotlight and you may find yourself having to pay out money for things you had hoped could be covered by a third party. Don't cut corners, as what you will be doing is investing in your long term security. A surprise split in your circle forces you to question your own situation in life. Ring now so I can help you work out what and who your sign really needs.
0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22
I can see that there don't seem to be enough hours in the day for you recently and stress which close ones have put you under has made it hard for you to see the wood for the trees, so to speak. Use Monday and Friday for heart to hearts with those involved when your amiable demeanour will make them more than willing to come round to your way of thinking. Ring now for the full story.
0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22
There are so many new faces entering your life over the coming days, that it may be hard for you to see who is good for you and who would be a bad influence on your future. You like to have a mix of characters in your life, so try to keep an open mind. It can teach you much about what makes the rest of the zodiac tick my friend. Ring now to hear how an ex is predicted to make contact.
0906 585 4365

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22
Don't let problems which have developed between you and a close one get any worse, but work instead on building up your relationship Libra. You know you have plenty of positive reasons to make an effort, so don't let those who are looking for dramatics convince you otherwise. Fellow Librans link to an intriguing new work path. Call me right now for more answers.
0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21
You have been doing so much for other people, but it's time you started doing something for yourself this week Scorpio. You see my friend, you'll be crossing paths with people who can enhance your life and light up your heart, so make you a priority. You'll be shaping the destiny of your dreams by your actions now. Ring me so I can explain in full what I see.
0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21
You start to look at life from a fresh perspective and you are no longer worried about how things seem to those watching. You spent much of the beginning of this month trying to fit in. No more. From Sunday you begin to feel your way through each day and situation. A surprise confession makes life more interesting. Ring now so I can tell you why Virgos are important to your month.
0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19
Try to be nice to all you meet and don't be rude or ignorant to those you don't know or it will have a domino effect on those you do care for. Someone is making you feel pressured to do something you don't want. Stand strong and stand up to them. You and I know you have the ability to dig your heels in when it's required. Ring now to hear which sign I think has been using you lately.
0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18
You may have to work with those you do not like or even respect, but there will be method to this madness Aquarius, as you'll be proving to those with power what a true professional you are. A new attraction makes you rethink what you thought you wanted from your future. Embrace your feelings, don't be ashamed of them. Ring now so I can help you be proud to be you.
0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20
You are beginning a really exciting new chapter of your life where you no longer feel influenced by family and friends, but you're the one in the driving seat. You've come a long way and many of your sign have come out of toxic situations to become stronger people. A new circle of friends does much for your ego. Ring now to hear how you're coming into your own this month.
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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Event for our amazing volunteers

Agnes Tew, left, and Sarah Fonzarelli, volunteer phone friends at Age UK in Banbury

A GET-TOGETHER for Banbury's volunteers will offer networking opportunities and the chance to swap ideas.

Charity workers and helpers who give their time to assist others have been invited to an informal reception at Banbury Town Hall on Friday, June 3, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

Part of the National Volunteers Week, it will be a night of socialising for men and women who work with charities, local groups and organisations.

Town mayor Gordon Ross said: "There are around 21 million volunteers across the country and they are a shining example of how we can all make a big difference to individuals and communities every day.

"They improve the environment, spend time with those who may otherwise be lonely, and contribute to a range of other essential services and support.

"This reception will recognise the part Banbury's volunteers play in the local community."

GARDENERS should put Saturday, May 28, in their diaries if they want free bedding plants.

Banbury Town Council is organising a plant giveaway at its nurseries in People's Park starting at 10am.

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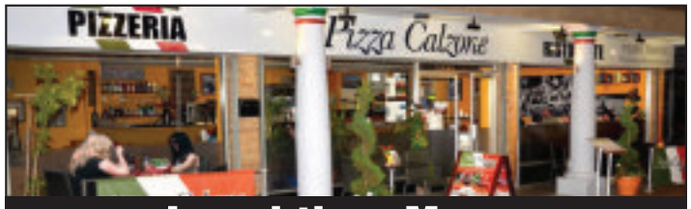

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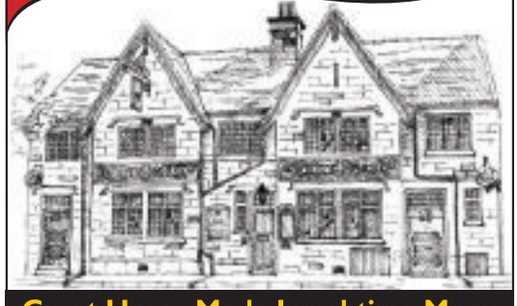

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Banbury & District Show

Saturday 25th
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Sunday 3rd 1.00pm - 4.00pm
Bark in the Park

AUGUST
Sunday 21st 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury Food Fair

Sunday 21st 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury Flower & Produce Show

SEPTEMBER
Saturday 3rd 9.30am - 3.30pm
Old Town Summer Party and Street Organ festival

Sunday 11th 10.30am - 12.30pm
Battle of Britain parade and Service

OCTOBER
Sunday 2nd 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury Canal Day

NOVEMBER
Sunday 13th 10.00am - 1.00pm
Remembrance Day parade

Sunday 27th 10.00am - 6.00pm
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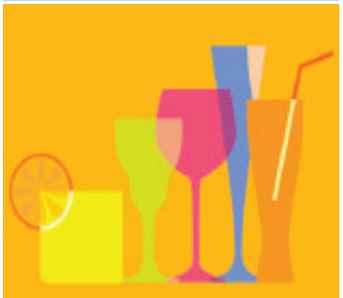

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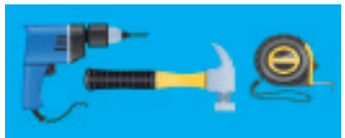

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7 EDUCATION

8 PUBLIC NOTICES

Announcements - Public Notices

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1), (5) & (7)

Notice of Temporary Traffic Order
Banbury, Butchers Row – Prohibition of Vehicles
Date of Order: 23 May 2016
Coming into force: 31 May 2016

This Order is being introduced because of new service water connection works which are anticipated to take 7 days to complete. The effect of the Order is to temporarily prohibit any vehicle proceeding in Butchers Row between the rear of Nos. 72 to 78 High Street. The one-way restriction in Butchers Row and the Prohibition of Vehicles using High Street and Market Place will be temporarily suspended to allow for access and egress of permitted vehicles only.

Appropriate traffic signs will be displayed to indicate when the measures are in force. The alternative route for the Butchers Row closure is via High Street and Market Place.

The relevant parts of the following orders shall be temporarily suspended for the duration of the works:

(1) The Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads, Banbury) (Traffic Regulation) Order 1980 (as amended) and

(2) The Cherwell District Council (Banbury Town Centre) (Pedestrian Streets And Traffic Regulation) Order 2002 (as amended).

This Order will remain in force for a maximum period of 18 months or until the works have been completed whichever is the sooner.

Traffic Regulations Team (Ref AC) for the Director for Environment & Economy, Speedwell House, Oxford OX1 1NE. 0845 310 1111.

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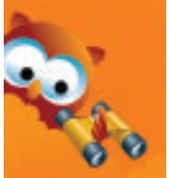

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*Source: Continental Research 2009: 57% of respondents stated that they used local media as a source of information when looking to buy/rent. Local media: local newspapers, websites and supplements.

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The Pumpyard in Deddington is on the market with Strutt & Parker; right, Giles Lawton

Village living now high on a house mover's wish list

Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

URBAN lifestyles might be cool but the trend is towards village living, according to research by a leading estate agent.

Strutt & Parker's Housing Futures report, which draws on three years of data, found a strong desire to move back to rural locations with plenty of amenities.

A fifth of those who are moving home said they wanted to live in a village, making it the most popular location, compared to one in six for a market town and only one in eight for a big city or suburb.

Broadband and mobile connections are seen as essential to rural life.

Access to broadband was a key factor for half of those intending to move to a village, while more than a third highlighted mobile connectivity.

Ease of access is an important issue for respondents intending to move to a village, with almost two thirds wanting to be able to walk to shops.

Half thought it important to be able to be within walking distance of local transport and the same proportion wanted to be able to walk to the nearest medical centre.

The shift away from cities is being driven by people looking for neighbourhood safety – cited by 86 per cent and space between neighbours mentioned by 58 per cent, as well as for a strong community feel, which was important to 48 per cent.

Stephanie McMahon, head of research at Strutt & Parker, said: "Existing research would suggest cities have the upper hand over villages – by the mid-century there will be approximately 65 million people living in Britain's cities, compared to just eight million in rural areas.

"However, as the urban trend has gathered pace in the UK, a number of negative traits have begun to appear."

Giles Lawton, partner at Strutt & Parker in Oxford, added: "We are spoilt for choice around Oxford, with so many picturesque thriving villages, with excellent communications, we get a terrific response to the right house at the right price."

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Bredon House

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market four bedroom detached property. The property comprises: entrance hall leading to living room; separate dining room or office; spacious kitchen including washing machine; fridge freezer and dishwasher.Upstairs there are four double bedrooms; family bathroom.

£1650

flat 1 Butchers Row

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market stunning one bedroom apartment conveniently situated in the town centre within walking distance to all local amenities including the train station. The property comprises a spacious open plan kitchen and living area; one double bedroom and a separate bathroom with shower and WC.

£695

4 Longworth Close

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to offer to the market, this one bedroom property in a prime location close to train station and M40. The property comprises; kitchen, large reception room, bathroom and one double bedroom. There is fridge/freezer and washing machine available. Close to town centre, train station and M40, this property would suit professional or couple.

£675

62 Kingsway

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market three bedroom detached property with garage; driveway parking and an enclosed garden. The property comprises: kitchen; living room and dining room; three bedrooms; family bathroom with bath and shower. The property also benefits from plenty of storage and fitted wardrobes.

£995

Broughton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present this two bedroom refurbished end of terrace property with enclosed rear garden. Located close proximity to the town centre, and walking distance to the train station. The property comprises: kitchen; living room; dining room; two bedrooms and bathroom. This property is available unfurnished. EPC - E

£875pcm

Friars Hill

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to introduce this studio apartment, in a beautiful rural location. The apartment is available unfurnished with washing machine and fridge/freezer included. The property also benefits from plentiful parking and large communal garden. The property has recently been redecorated and is available now.

£450

42 Sir Henry Jake Close

Martin & Co are delighted to offer this three bedroom semi detached house on Hanwell Fields with garage and garden. The property benefits from 2 reception rooms as well as larger than average bedrooms with fitted wardrobes.

£1000

25 Sage Close

Martin & Co are pleased to present a large three bedroom furnished property. The property comprises: spacious entrance hall with storage cupboard; dining room; kitchen with separate breakfast area.Good sized first floor lounge; separate utility room. The master bedroom benefits from fitted wardrobes and an ensuite shower room.

£1050

119 Broom Way

Martin & Co are pleased to present this spacious three bedroom property. The property comprises a separate kitchen with fridge freezer and washing machine; spacious lounge overlooking the garden; upstairs there are three bedrooms and a family bathroom with bath and shower. The property benefits from a rear enclosed garden and allocated parking.

£925

6 Albert Street

A new to the market very spacious three bedroom terraced house with garden in the town centre and walking distance to the train station. Available unfurnished. Good size living accommodation with two reception rooms and spacious kitchen. Separate utility room. Original Victorian features throughout. Book your viewing now! Ideal for a professional family.

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Middleton Road

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to offer, this two bedroom apartment within close proximity and walking distance to the town centre and train station. Open plan living and kitchen area. Contemporary and neutral decor throughout. Intercom system and secure parking. Available mid May. Book your viewing now.

£725

62 Causeway

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to offer this two bedroom mid terraced property, with close proximity to train station and town centre. The property comprises; kitchen, lounge, bathroom, two bedrooms. There is on road parking, and a small garden to the rear of the property. Suitable for single or professional couple.

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Warwick Road Banbury Offers in excess of £310,000

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Wykham Lane Broughton £299,950

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Rochester Close Middleton Cheney
£425,000

Modern detached | Cul de sac location | Four bedrooms | Cloakroom | Kitchen/ breakfast room | Utility | Dining room | Living room | Study/ playroom | En suite | Integral Double garage | Backs onto fields | Double glazed and gas centrally heated |Viewing is highly recommended | EPC - B |

Austin Drive Banbury
£375,000

Detached | Four double bedrooms | Corner plot | Ensuite to master | Cloakroom | Detached Garage | Off street parking for several vehicles | Kitchen Diner | Family room | Family oriented Garden | Well presented throughout | EPC - D

Bloxham Road Banbury
£465,000

Detached | Five bedrooms | Desirable Location| Ample parking | Converted garage | Dining room | Utility | Downstairs cloakroom | Enclosed rear garden | Double glazed | Gas central heating | EPC - E

Parsley Place Hanwell Fields
£185,000

One Bedroom Coach House | Quiet Cul de sac location | Lounge area | kitchen area | Allocated off road parking | Garage | Gas centrally heated | Double Glazed | Sought after location | EPC - B

Hazeldene Gardens Cherwell Heights
£374,950

Detached | Four bedrooms | Extended and much improved | Cloakroom | Lounge | Dining area | Kitchen/breakfast | Study/ family room | Integral garage and parking | Cul de sac location | Viewing highly recommended. | EPC - D

Rosemary Drive Hanwell Fields
£165,000

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Kia's Optima is handsome and grows in stature

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New Car Road Test

The definitive view
by Andy Enright

Ever the optimist, inspired by innovation

KIA'S Mondeo-sized medium range Optima saloon keeps its handsome looks and grows in stature, with the main improvements made to this second generation version targeting refinement, interior style and space. With this much improved model, Kia aims to challenge the market leaders and even worry a few of the more premium players.

Background

This Kia Optima is somewhat confusingly billed as a 'fourth-generation' model but this is the second generation version of this car that we've seen here. Earlier models were known as the 'Magentis' in Britain and shared much of their underpinnings with Hyundai's Sonata. The Magentis was well built, cheap and well equipped but there wasn't anything very aspirational about it. In contrast, the Optima saloon we first saw in this country in late 2011 was very different, with styling from Kia's Chief Designer Peter Schreyer that signalled a move upmarket.

Driving Experience

The first thing to acknowledge is that the Kia Optima has lost weight, shedding up to 65kg. The sole 1.7-litre diesel engine on offer now produces 140PS, while low-end grunt has been improved by an electronically controller turbocharger to deliver 340Nm of torque at lower engine speeds. That's an increase of 15Nm over the old model, resulting in fractionally quicker acceleration times of 10 seconds from 0 to 62mph for the manual and 11 seconds in the automatic. There has been a marginal increase in top speeds as well, with both transmission variants topping out at 126mph. There's the option of a new more efficient twin-clutch DCT auto gearbox with this engine. And Kia has also developed a petrol/electric hybrid model with a 2.0-litre GDI petrol engine mated to a 50 kW electric motor. Total power output for the package is 205PS.

Design and Build

Despite losing weight, the revised Optima has grown in every direction, affording even greater rear legroom than before - though that wasn't really an issue in the earlier model. Luggage capacity has increased by 5 litres to 510-litres. This is still far short of the VW Passat's 586-litre total and even the Ford Mondeo's 541-litre figure, but it's a step closer. As before, the range is based solely at launch around a saloon bodystyle, despite the fact that it shares its underpinnings with Hyundai's i40, a car offered in both four and five-door guises. Kia says it has future plans for an estate version though.

Market and Model

Expect prices for the Optima to remain as before in the £20,000-£28,000 bracket - though inevitably the hybrid version will cost more than that. This places the Kia Optima right in the heart of the Ford Mondeo's domain, with the Volkswagen Passat also offering a strong package in terms of refinement, quality and style for just a relatively small premium over the equivalent Optima models.
Kia has introduced a number of technological innovations in the cabin, with wireless phone charging enabled by a pad below the centre console. Drivers can simply place their compatible device on the pad and carry on with their journey and the phone will automatically begin to charge. 'Kia Connected Services' is a software package that integrates with the audio-visual navigation system to provide timely and relevant information to the driver. The 7 or 8 inch touch screen in the centre of the dashboard also controls the DAB Digital radio and infotainment system. Autonomous Driver aids offered as options include 'Advanced Cruise Control' to adjust the speed in relation to other vehicles, 'High Beam Assist' to avoid dazzling oncoming drivers, and 'Rear Cross Traffic Alert' to make reversing manoeuvres safer for other road-users.

Cost of Ownership

The manual Optima model now emits 121g/km of CO2, which just keeps it in the £110 tax bracket, while those manuals with an 'Idle Stop-Go' pack emit only 110g/km and enjoy the £20 a year tax band. The auto model's now more efficient DCT 'box impressively produces 116g/km, putting it in the £30 a year rate. The combined cycle fuel economy for the manual is around 51.1mpg while the DCT auto returns 53.5mpg. With the 'Idle Stop-Go' pack, fuel economy can be as high as 56mpg. Rivals like Ford's Mondeo 1.5 TDCi ECOnetic do slightly better, while Volkswagen's Passat BlueMotion 1.6 TDI model manages a combined cycle 76.3mpg showing, so Kia still has a little way to go here to match the class leaders.

Summary

This much improved Kia Optima may not look much different from the outside - but then the outside was the one thing that didn't really need changing. What required improvement was the plasticky interior, the gutless engine and the inefficient automatic transmission option and all these issues have been duly dealt with in this enhanced model. Several key ones remain though. Efficiency is still not up to the standard of the class best and there's still only one mainstream engine option - and a single saloon bodystyle in a class where most buyers choose hatches or estates.
Still, if you can overlook these issues, there's much to like here. Affordable pricing, a spacious appealing cabin, high levels of equipment, a smooth DCT auto gearbox and the longest warranty in the class are all big draws. In short, Kia has rejuvenated its offering in this segment.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Kia Optima
PRICE: £21,495-£28,895
INSURANCE GROUP: 19E-20E
CO2 EMISSIONS: 110g/km - 116g/km
PERFORMANCE: 0-62mph 10s / top speed 121mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION: (combined) 67.3 mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: Seven Airbags, 'Vehicle Stability Management', 'Electronic Stability Control'
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Used Car Road Test

by Jonathan Crouch

Going for an Italian won't break the bank

FIAT'S cheeky little new-era 500 is fun, fashionable and frugal - and the Italian brand has never stopped trying to develop it. After being first launched in 2008, it was updated with TwinAir 0.9-litre petrol turbo power in 2011, then revised again three years later to create the 2014 to 2015 version we're going to examine here as a used buy. The 2014 model year changes brought buyers the option of a pokier 105bhp variant of the petrol TwinAir engine and there was a smarter TFT instrument display on top models, along with a trendy 'Cult' trim level. If you can stretch to a later Fiat 500 model, then it could well be a car from this era that you end up inspecting.

The History

If ever a car has built its brand, it's this one, Fiat's 500. In fact, it's done so twice. First at its original launch back in 1957. And more recently with this modern era version, first launched in 2008. Ever since, it's been a money-spinner for the Italian brand, who've continually developed it, notably in early 2014 when buyers of the more expensive versions got a smarter TFT digital instrument display and the option of a pokier 105bhp version of the clever two cylinder TwinAir petrol engine. These changes kept buyers interested in the range until more widespread changes could be introduced in the Summer of 2015 and it's these 2014 to 2015 era models that we're going to look at here.

The flagship 0.9-litre TwinAir 105bhp engine is key to this model's appeal in this period. First, it bridged the previously rather large gap between the standard '500' range and the sporty 1.4-litre turbo 'Abarth 500' models. Secondly, it at last gave Fiat a tool to directly compete with what was probably this car's closest competitor at the time, the MINI Hatch. To keep buyers loyal, this improved post-2014 500 model's smarter cabin and slick TFT digital instrument display was key for the Italian brand's sales people.

As before, the 500 model from this period was also available in '500C' guise with an electrically-retracting fabric top. Either way, it offered all the cute, fashionable flair buyers could want - and across most of the range, super-low running costs that, thanks to the clever TwinAir and Multijet technology, easily beat not only those of a MINI but also any conventional little small runabout.

What To Look For

The 500 has earned a decent reliability record, helped in no small part by its reliable engines. The biggest reported issue to date has been premature ball joint wear and pressure plate issues - but these had mostly been sorted by the time of the 2014 model year models we're looking at here. Check for upholstery damage caused by child seats in the back, typical supermarket dints and scrapes, slipping clutches on the manual cars and ensure all the electrical functions - which can get surprisingly sophisticated on upspec models - work as advertised as these can be expensive to fix. The 500 isn't bad on consumables like brake pads and most people should be able to park it without nerfing the extremities.

On The Road

Turn the key in a TwinAir-powered 500 and there's an engine note to suit the cheeky retro looks, a putter-putter sound that seems to be exactly the kind of thing you'd have heard from the 1957 original nipping through the back streets of Naples. There's even a pleasing note of historical symmetry in that the original Fiat 500 from the Fifties also had two cylinder power - though back then, the wheezy old unit in question generated just 17.5bhp. With an output that's five times greater, this car is of course a much pleasanter prospect and for us, this is the engine that today's version of this model should always have had.

Not that there isn't also still a place for the more conventional 69bhp four cylinder 1.2-litre petrol unit that props up the range. Or indeed for the 135bhp 1.4 T-Jet turbo petrol powerplant that serves in the hot hatch Abarth 500 model. You can also see why some 500 buyers might continue to prefer the 95bhp 1.3-litre diesel variant, which on paper matches the TwinAir's frugality but in day-to-day reality, probably betters it.

Overall

To be honest, Fiat didn't need to do a whole lot with the 2014 model year changes to retain this 500 model's popularity. Like earlier examples of this car, this later version looks great, and was fun to drive. As for this updated version, well the interior improvements were welcome but of more importance was the addition to the range of the 105bhp TwinAir petrol engine. This bridged the gap between this car and the slightly more powerful small city runabouts that previously had often seen themselves as a class above this Fiat. Principally BMW's MINI.

In fact, both versions of the TwinAir two cylinder petrol unit are a key part of this Fiat's appeal, this powerplant certainly makes the 500 a very cheap thing to run. Yes, this model remains pretty small inside, but then smallness is all part of the appeal. You'll appreciate that when zipping around town in one.

In summary then, this car remains as likeable as ever. Choosing a 'fashionable' little used runabout can often be a risk. Here though, is one you can enjoy without a worry.

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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week

by Jonathan Crouch

Taking it to the edge and back

FORD has completed its SUV line-up with a larger model, the Edge, a car that takes the brand back into the luxury part of this segment. Canadian-built, it's largely designed for the other side of the Atlantic, but the brand reckons it's also been tuned for the needs of European buyers too.

Background

Ford's record in bringing us large, luxurious SUVs isn't one of the very best. The brand's last effort in this regard was the forgettable Explorer, a heavy, inefficient lumbering 4x4 that was fine for Stateside buyers but rather inappropriate for European ones. At last though, the brand has tried again in this segment and this Edge mode looks a much more competitive proposition. It's built in Ontario, Canada but was designed from the outset to be a world car, rather than merely one to suit the Americas. Hence the efficient 2.0-litre TDCi diesel engine fitted to all variants this side of the Atlantic. And cutting edge levels of technology. Here, we preview what's on offer.

Driving Experience

We've yet to drive an Edge but the prospects look promising. The car is offered here with a choice of 180PS 2.0-litre TDCi diesel engine with six-speed manual transmission, or a 210PS bi-turbo 2.0litre TDCi diesel with a six-speed PowerShift automatic gearbox. The Edge offers fresh Ford technologies, including Adaptive Steering, which automatically optimises the steering response according to vehicle speed, making it easy to manoeuvre at low speeds, while remaining precise and intuitive at higher speeds.

The Edge features Ford's Intelligent All-Wheel Drive (AWD) technology as standard, delivering a seamless transition between front-wheel drive and all-wheel drive performance to provide a more secure footing on the road especially in slippery conditions. Measuring how the car's wheels are gripping the road surface every 16 milliseconds - 20 times quicker than it takes to blink - the system can send up to 100 per cent of engine torque to the front or rear wheels. Strong refinement is achieved with acoustic windscreen glass and all Edge models are also equipped with Ford's Active Noise Control technology that detects unwanted engine noise in the cabin and cancels it out with opposing sound waves fed through the integrated sound system.

Design and Build

The Edge model's exterior is sharply sculpted and athletic with strong 'shoulders' and a muscular, quite compact bonnet. To improve efficiency, unique air curtains are positioned on the lower part of the fascia to guide air from the front of the vehicle, out through the front wheel wells and down the vehicle side.

The interior has been designed with pretty high-quality materials throughout, including soft-touch trims on the dashboard and centre console, high-gloss piano black surrounds on the switch bezels and a satin silver metal finish for the door handles, air vent bezels, glovebox trim and steering wheel detailing. The Edge is also offered with heated and cooled front seats and heated rear seats from mid-range 'Titanium' trim.

Market and Model

All Edge models use a 2.0-litre TDCi diesel and feature All Wheel Drive. You'll pay from around £30,000 for the entry-level 'Zetec' 180PS version. You'll need a budget of around £35,000 if you want this engine in pokier 210PS guise. There are three trim levels, 'Zetec', 'Titanium'; and 'Sport' and on the 210PS version, you get a 6-speed Powershift auto gearbox.

The Edge is well-equipped as standard, offering Active Noise Control, Pedestrian Detection, a Ford DAB Audio system with SYNC 2 connectivity, privacy glass and 19in alloy wheels. The car debuts a segment-first 'Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection' system. This is a camera- and radar-based set-up that can operate at speeds from 5mph to 110mph to detect vehicles and people in the road ahead. The system can automatically apply the brakes if a potential collision is detected and the driver does not respond to warnings. Plus there's the option of a Front Wide View Camera, which makes restricted visibility junctions or parking spaces easier to negotiate.

Cost of Ownership

Ford is confident that the Edge meets the class standard for efficiency. By only delivering torque where and when it is needed, the car's Intelligent AWD set-up has minimal impact on fuel-efficiency and CO2emissions compared with permanent four-wheel drive systems. As a result, both 2.0 TDCi diesel powertrains aim to deliver 48.7mpg fuel efficiency and 149g/km CO2 supported by Auto-Start-Stop technology.

Early indications of residual values also look promising, with CAP's Gold Book expecting a 180PS 2.0-litre TDCi manual 'Zetec' variant to retain 56.6% of its new list price, after three years and 30,000 miles.

Summary

One thing's for certain: this is the most competitive large SUV that the Blue Oval brand has yet brought us. It's sharply styled, well equipped and as capable off road as it needs to be.

Though we'll need to reserve final judgement until we get behind the wheel, we can already recommend this car as a promising prospect.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Ford Edge
PRICES: £29,995 - £36,745 [est]
INSURANCE GROUPS: TBC
CO2 EMISSIONS: 149g/km
PERFORMANCE: TBC
FUEL CONSUMPTION: (combined) 48.7mpg
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